

Dam

continued from page 1

streams. He said he has supervised the removal of 10 dams similar to the Marion dam — called “lowhead dams” — including two in the Corydon area in southern Indiana.

The City of Marion has a \$50,000 contract with Sweeten’s company to study and make recommendations on the future of the dam. The study also involves work with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, the Grant County Soil and Water Conservation District, and several other offices and agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. While the DNR and the Corps of Engineers have wide authority on rivers and

streams, the dam itself is owned by the City of Marion.

The meeting Thursday in the Marion City Council chambers was designed to be a report from Sweeten with assistance from Marion City Engineer Mike Graft.

Sweeten and engineer A.J. Fricke presented data on the dam and its environment, but stopped short of recommending its removal.

“It’s going to be up to you,” Graft told about 35 people who attended the meeting, indicating there will be additional meetings before a proposal to remove or restore is taken to the Marion City Council for any action.

“We can tell you why it would be a good thing if it is removed,” Graft said, “but that will not be our decision. It’s going to come down to you people here in Marion.”

Among those in the audience were some arguing for preservation because of fishing behind the dam and others arguing for the aesthetic and economic possibilities of riverfront development.

Several harkened back to the 1960s and ‘70s when the Mississinewa Boat and Ski Club presented water ski and regatta shows on the river in front of Charles Mill. A boat launch maintained by the club still can be found at the waterfront

in Charles Mill Park south of the dam. The boat and ski club has been inactive for more than 25 years.

While none of the officials would attach a price to the removal project at the meeting, Sweeten had said earlier in the week in a WBAT radio interview that it would cost about \$400,000 to remove the structure. He estimated about 75 per cent of that cost would come from federal and state grant money, with the remainder — about \$100,000 — to be borne by the city.

Randall Miller, a Marion surveyor and owner of an engineering firm, dominated the question-and-answer portion of the program, acknowledging that he had “about three full pages of questions” on both the science and economics of the project.

He expressed concerns about the appearance of the banks on both sides of the river if the dam were removed and the river dropped to its natural level and width.

He also expressed con-

cern about health issues because there is still combined storm water and sanitary sewer discharge into the river during times of heavy rain. He was told the completion of dam removal would about coincide with the completion of the federally-mandated separation of storm water and sanitary sewer overflow.

Absent the dam, the river immediately upstream from the dam and extending through most of downtown Marion would drop by about seven feet, Fricke and Sweeten said.

“There are economic possibilities in having that pool there,” Miller said, “and it is difficult to attach a value to the aesthetic and scenic worth of it.”

Sweeten agreed that those arguments can be made, “but there is nothing in the science that I can find that would be negative about removing the dam.”

“There is a difference between the science and the social science issues. The social science part is yet to be determined,” Sweeten said.

He said his study found 11 species of fish above the dam and 34 below the structure, and said both would increase if the impediment to upstream movement for spawning were removed.

“Fish want to migrate upstream, but they cannot do that if the dam is blocking the waterway,” Sweeten said. He said the Charles Mill dam is one of an estimated 1,100 such dams on Indiana streams. Some were built to power mills and others were built for local hydroelectric generations 100 or more years ago.

Graft also cited the hazard of people drowning in the immediate area of the dam. He said in his years he was aware of two drownings and, as recently as 2016, two teenage boys were rescued from the current in flood waters.

State law prohibits people going within 50 feet of these kinds of “lowhead” dams because current created is strong and can be very difficult to escape. There is no complete record of the number of fatalities at the Mississinewa dam.



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MHS is finalist for Indiana AP program award

On Wednesday, it was announced that Marion High School was named a finalist for the AP-TIP IN Affiliate of the Year Award. The winner of his year’s

award will be announced Nov. 6 in a recorded ceremony to be released at 10 am. The ceremony will also honor the program’s Teacher of the Year honorees.

MHS students consistently outperform state and global averages on Advanced Placement tests, and several students every year earn AP Scholar honors.

Since 2012 the Advanced Placement Teacher Investment Program for Indiana (AP-TIP IN) has worked with participating Indiana public high schools to improve college and career readiness for students by engaging them in rigorous math, science, and English coursework. It aims to increase the enrollment in AP classes at participating schools, and to increase the number of students passing the corresponding tests. The program also delivers high-quality professional

development to teachers at participating schools.

AP-TIP IN is administered by the University of Notre Dame’s Institute for Educational Initiatives, with support from the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI), the US Department of Education, the University of Notre Dame, and the Indiana State Department of Education.

After participation in the initial two-year program, schools can continue to remain in the program as affiliate schools. Marion High School was part of AP-TIP IN cohort 5 selected for the 2018-19 school year, and is now an affiliate school.





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